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The Orinoco Claims Award.

The Orinoco Claims Case, which was taken up by the Hague Court on the 20th of September, has been quickly disposed of. The case is in some respects, because involving the principle of appeal and review, much more important than appears on the surface.

The Orinoco Steamship Company, a company doing business under a New Jersey charter, brought an action for damages against the Venezuela government for the repudiation by President Castro of an agreement giving the company certain exclusive privileges in that country. Damages to the extent of \$1,400,000 were claimed. The case was finally submitted to Dr. Charles Barge as umpire. On the 22d of February, 1904, he awarded the company \$28,700.

The company appealed to the United States government, which rejected the Barge decision on the ground that it was in violation of the principles of international law. After prolonged negotiations Venezuela was finally induced by the late William I. Buchanan, who was sent as a special envoy to Caracas, to allow the whole matter to go to the Hague Court.

The contention of our government, presented by William C. Dennis, Assistant Solicitor of the Department of State, was that the Barge award was in a number of ways erroneous and unjust, that it ought therefore to be declared null and void, and that the original claims should be settled on their merits.

On four points the Barge award has been declared null. The Orinoco Steamship Company is awarded \$46,867, with three per cent. interest since June 16, 1903, and \$7,000 costs. This amount is to be paid by Venezuela in two months.

The United States representatives consider the decision a vindication of our government's position in the matter, though the damages assessed against Venezuela are comparatively small, and not all the points made by our counsel were sustained.

This case is particularly interesting from the fact that it practically establishes the Hague Tribunal as a court of appeal, although appeal to it in this instance was by agreement of the parties. But it is possible that in the years to come the development of the court may be such that either of the parties to a settlement made by an arbitrator or board of arbitrators not drawn from the Hague Tribunal may be able to secure a review of the case by direct appeal to it. The court ought certainly, so long as no more complete international high tribunal of justice exists, to have the power, either by convention or through natural development, to prevent substantial injustice in cases where arbitrators have clearly failed to get at the real merits of the controversy.

While we are glad, of course, as "good patriots" that our government has won in this case, we are equally rejoiced that the decision gives no encouragement to foreign companies doing business in a country to believe that they can bring suits for exorbitant damages against that country's government and expect to go to The Hague and find support for their rapacity.

A Great Opportunity Neglected.

In his Nobel Prize address at Christiania last May ex-President Roosevelt, as is well known, made the following utterance: "Granted sincerity of purpose, the great powers of the world should find no insurmountable difficulty in reaching an agreement which would put an end to the present costly and growing extravagance of expenditure on naval armaments." He went so far as